

REMARKS

In view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Currently, claims 21-29, 31 and 47-70 remain pending in the present application including independent claims 21 and 53. The presently pending claims are generally directed to an embossed paper product. For instance, the paper product can comprise a base web, which includes pulp fibers. The base web of the paper product includes a well-defined, decorative pattern, which covers from about 2% to about 60% of the surface area of the web and extends to the central portion of the web.

The decorative pattern is embossed into the web by a combination of heat and pressure applied together at a heated embossing nip such that the pulp fibers of the web are bonded together. The embossing nip may be formed between a rigid pattern roll and a backing roll covered by a resilient elastomeric material, commonly known as a rubber backing roll. The combination of the heat and pressure applied at the compliant nip allows for a well-defined, resilient embossment to be formed. In one embodiment, the embossing elements, used to emboss the pattern onto the web, are raised above the land areas about 0.02 inches to about 0.06 inches.

The paper product of the present invention can include a single-ply web with the embossed decorative pattern or, alternatively, can be a multi-ply product including separate plies which have been simultaneously bonded together and embossed in the heated embossing nip.

In the Office Action, claims 21-26, 28, 47, 49, 53-57, 59, 64, and 65 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,890,540 to Britt.

Britt is directed to making a damask-like napkin through a method of embossing. Britt requires the product to be damask-like. In the specification, a damask-like product is described as "having high sheen and pleasing surface feel of starched linen napkins and by having its surface covered with multitude of straight, narrow, shallow grooves closely in any one area, with adjacent areas having the grooves extending in a direction traverse to the grooves in the first areas." (Col. 3, lines 27-32) The decorative pattern

disclosed by Britt was specifically designed to mimic the appearance and texture of damask linen napkins.

Figures 2, 3 and 4 of Britt show the extent of the surface area coverage by the embossing pattern. It is apparent that much more than 60% of the surface area of the damask-like napkins contains a decorative pattern. In fact, the entire napkin, shown in Figure 2, is embossed with a decorative line pattern.

In stark contrast, independent claims 21 and 53 of the present application both require the decorative pattern embossed into the base web to only cover from about 2% to about 60% of the surface area of the base web. Thus, since both of the independent claims restrict the decorative pattern to cover only from about 2% to about 60% of the surface area, Applicants submit that the claims patentably define over Britt under 35 U.S.C § 102.

The Examiner's attention is also directed to new claims 69 and 70 which state that the bonding areas contained in the paper products of the present invention be from about 0.02 inches to about 0.06 inches deep. In contrast, Britt discloses much shallower grooves formed into the damask-like napkin disclosed therein.

In particular, Britt states, "the deeper the grooves for any pitch, the greater will be the strain upon the paper and the weaker the paper will be...". Britt discloses that deep grooves have a tendency to rupture the fibers. (Col. 5, lines 15 - 20) In one preferred embodiment, the depth of the grooves is 0.006 inches. Further, in the example table, in column 5 of the disclosure, the groove depths range from 0.006 inches to 0.012 inches.

In comparison, both new claims, 69 and 70, require the bonding areas to be at least 0.02 inches deep. The deeper bonding areas may provide various advantages, especially when bonding multiple plies together. Thus, Applicants submit that new claims 69 and 70 also patentably define over Britt.

In the Office Action, Grupe and Cabell were also cited in rejecting various dependent claims. Claims 21 and 53, however, are believed to also patentably define over both of the above references.

As requested in the Office Action, also enclosed are formal drawings.

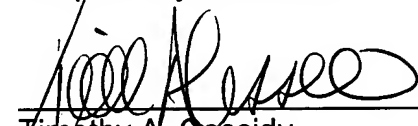
In view of the foregoing discussion, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the pending application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are patentably distinctive over the prior art of record. Applicants believe that the present application is in complete condition for allowance and favorable action, therefore, is respectfully requested.

Examiner Hug is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned should any issues remain after consideration of this response. Please charge any additional fees required by this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 04-1403.

5/18/04

Date

Respectfully submitted,



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